

FRANCO-GERMAN RELATIONS 1871-
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After a year's absence from Paris Prince Hohenlohe, the late German Ambassador, described in his diary on November 10, 1886, the new and anxious situation. "What strikes, me most is the change in Boulanger's position. In the spring of last year he was considered a *farceur*. To-day he has the majority of the Chamber on his side. Freycinet does not dare to get rid of him, and even Ferry would find it difficult to form a Ministry without him. He knows how to win people and to da2zle the masses. If he stays two years longer in office, the conviction will become universal that he is the man to reconquer the provinces, and, as he is utterly unscrupulous and extremely ambitious, he will carry the masses into war. Blowitz agrees, and says that, if he remains, war will come in 1888. His fall is inevitable directly the country sees where he is leading it. Then he will be swept away, for the country is still pacific. But in a year it will be different." "In Boulanger," echoes the Belgian Charge a month later, "the whole of France personifies her dreams of future greatness." The German Military Attache sent home a series of alarming reports on the ambitions and popularity of the new leader.

During this orgy of chauvinism the French Government remained unmoved. The new Ambassador to Berlin, Herbert Bismarck, who as Director of the Foreign Office had co-operated with Freycinet and enjoyed his confidence, arrived in October 1886, and explained the views of his Government in a remarkable conversation with the Foreign Minister, Herbert Bismarck. The good services rendered by Germany in regard to France's colonial policy, he declared, were known only to the few: now was the time to show the French people the real aims of German policy. "What a *detente* there would be, and how all

our suspicions and apprehensions would vanish
if Prince
Bismarck publicly declared that he would use his
immense
authority for the maintenance of the *status quo*
in the Mediter-
ranean ! All eyes would turn from the East, and
we could
employ all our resources in the Mediterranean,
the theatre of
our vital interests. It is a question of existence
for us as a
Great Power that England should evacuate
Egypt. I assure
you that the Mediterranean is the pivot of our
policy and that
the English are abominated in France, far more
than the Ger-
mans have ever been. The idea of the *revanche* is
out of date."
There was an element of unreality in such
language while
Boulanger was the darling of the Paris mob, and
it evoked tio
response in Berlin.